

The City of Duluth has received notice of intent to strike effective March 9, 2010, from AFSCME in connection with ongoing mediated negotiations for the basic unit contract. Some rumors and questions are circulating about what happens during a strike and similar issues. In an effort to prevent the spread of inaccurate information and to address the questions that we are receiving, here are the answers to some frequently asked questions. We will continue to update you via email, and the City's website as issues and concerns come to our attention.

EMPLOYEE FAQS

1. I am not an AFSCME employee. Can I refuse to cross the picket line?

No. All employees not in the striking bargaining unit are required to be at work. Minnesota law requires that a public employee who is not part of a striking bargaining unit must proceed to work.

2. As an AFSCME member, can I choose to cross the picket line?

Yes. That is your personal choice. The City has work for employees if they choose to cross the picket line. You will receive your regular salary and benefits if you choose to continue to work.

3. As an AFSCME employee, can I be disciplined by AFSCME for crossing the picket line?

For questions regarding discipline, you should check with the State Bureau of Mediation Services at (651) 649-5421, or your union steward, for information.

4. Can an AFSCME fair share member strike?

Fair-share bargaining unit members have a choice whether or not to strike, and whether or not to cross the picket line and report for work.

5. As an AFSCME employee, if I am out on strike, can I change my mind and cross the picket line to come back to work?

Yes – one time. An AFSCME bargaining unit member who initially participates in a strike will be allowed to return to work during the strike. However, if you subsequently choose to go back out and participate in the strike after you initially return to work, you will not be allowed to return to work a second time during the remainder of the strike. In that event, you may return only upon the conclusion of the work stoppage.

6. As an AFSCME employee, if I cross the picket line, will I be fired from my job?

No. You cannot be fired either for crossing a picket line or for choosing to honor a lawful strike.

7. As an AFSCME employee, can I come to my work location to pick up my last paycheck if I don't have direct deposit?

No. All striking employees' checks will be mailed to their homes.

8. As an AFSCME employee, if I am on strike, how will my wages be affected?

You will not receive wages during the time you are out on strike. You are not allowed to use sick, vacation, compensatory time or any other accrued time while on strike.

9. As an AFSCME employee, if I am on strike, how will my benefits be affected?

Your medical, prescription drug, employee assistance program, dental and life insurance benefits will remain in effect through the last day of the month in which you last worked. For example, if a strike begins on March 9th, you will have coverage until March 31st. However, striking employees are eligible for continuation of health, dental and life insurance by paying 100% of the COBRA premium. If you elect COBRA Continuation, it will commence on the first day of the following month. The City will send notices to striking employees. Below is the cost of 2010 monthly COBRA rates:

Benefit Plans	Single	Single + 1	Family
Medical & Prescription Drug Plan	\$484.58	N/A	\$1,193.61
Low Option Dental (\$1,000 annual benefit)	\$32.64	\$66.30	\$108.12
High Option Dental (\$2,000 annual benefit)	\$74.46	\$124.44	\$223.38
Employee Assistance Program	\$.90		
Employee Basic Life	\$15.30		
Employee Supplemental Life	*		
Spouse Supplemental Life	*		
Child Supplemental Life (\$10,000)	\$ 1.33		

* Premiums are individually determined (employee's current premium plus 2%)

Examples:

- a) An employee with family coverage and low option dental will need to pay \$1301.73 per month.
- b) A single employee with low option dental will need to pay \$517.22 per month.

Other benefits:

Your vacation leave accrual and employer contributions towards PERA, deferred comp, flexible spending account(s), and the Health Care Savings Plan will cease at the end of the day you last worked.

10. **As an AFSCME employee, if I cross the picket line, what happens to my benefits?**

All benefits and leave accruals will continue as usual.

11. **As an AFSCME employee, what happens to my Flex Spending Account (FSA) if I go on strike?**

The medical FSA plan will terminate on the date you go on strike. If you have underspent your medical FSA, you will be offered COBRA Continuation. If you have overspent your medical FSA, you will not be offered COBRA Continuation. If you are enrolled in the Dependent Daycare FSA, plan participation will terminate on the date you go on strike. The Dependent Daycare FSA is not a COBRA eligible benefit.

12. **As an AFSCME employee, can I use my vacation, personal leave or comp time if I go on strike?**

No.

13. **As an AFSCME employee, what happens if I am in need of medical/sick leave after the strike occurs?**

Employees who honor the picket line will not be eligible for medical/sick leave pay once the strike occurs.